



Why is the West wooing New Delhi?

Indian moment: a remarkable shift in the outreach by the West

1. The West has been asking India to do more and the western media has lectured India on its democratic responsibilities. But western governments seem to comprehend India's challenges much better, and so, in an ironic way, this crisis has provided the means for both New Delhi and the West to come closer and to engage each other more substantively.
2. From Washington and London to Berlin and Paris, India is being viewed as a strategic opportunity that has to be nurtured, not as a perpetual naysayer, that is a challenge.

Reasons for the shift:

This remarkable shift in the outreach by the West can be attributed to three key factors.

- First, of course, is the wider structural shift in the global balance of power. With the centre of gravity of global politics and economics now firmly located in the Indo-Pacific, China's challenge to the international order can no longer be brushed aside as a mere irritant that will self-correct eventually.
- For the West, a partnership with India has become a veritable necessity to manage the widespread disruption in the international system caused by China.
- The second factor has been a reassessment by western Europe of its own identity as a global actor. And, so, while American might and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization were to manage Russia, economic cooperation was to be the most potent antidote to Chinese expansionism.
- From simmering disconnect within the EU to the externalities emanating from China's rise and Russia's revisionism, western Europe today is going back to the basics. This new strategic reorientation of western Europe is well aligned with India's priorities and the newfound convergence is leading to an ever more robust engagement.
- The final, and perhaps the most important, element in this shifting approach of the West is not about the West at all but about India's response to its strategic priorities.

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- Today's self-confident India has a new voice on the global firmament — clear, rooted in the domestic realities and civilisational ethos as well as firm in the pursuit of its vital interests.
- As external affairs minister S Jaishankar remarked at last week's Raisina Dialogue, it is better to engage with the world on the basis of "who we are" rather than try and please the world. If India is confident about its identity and priorities, the world will engage with India on its terms.

Realization in the west:

India's focus today is on enhancing its capabilities in every possible sector and that allows for a more clear-eyed engagement with its partners. The West today hears an Indian voice on the global stage that is capable of articulating a narrative of a responsible stakeholder that is firmly steeped in its own ethos. And this, more than anything else, has allowed a new reality to dawn in western capitals that today's India means business and it can't be business as usual. Therefore, a substantive western engagement with India is a natural consequence, the Ukraine crisis notwithstanding.



Harsh V Pant